

the poor, the vulnerable. Raising the eligibility age for Medicare or Social Security, or cutting benefit levels, will be subject to an up-or-down vote by this new joint committee. No amendments can be offered or voted on. This process weakens Congress as an institution, and it is a dangerous abdication of our responsibility for these bedrock programs.

We have worked over the years to make careful changes to Medicare when necessary to restore its solvency. In the Affordable Care Act, we enacted careful reforms that will improve the efficiency and soundness of Medicare. Arbitrary cuts to the program through sequestration, or rushed cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, are no way to guarantee the future of those vital programs. We run the risk of substantial changes that will drive providers out of the system, leaving patients without access to doctors or to nursing homes and long term care services.

This legislation does not represent the values to which I have been committed since first being elected to Washington.

That is why I have concluded that this package does not deserve my support today.

#### PROCLAMATION

**HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, August 2, 2011*

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker,

Whereas, In 2003, Ms. Kim Schofield founded the Lupus And Community Empowering Support organization better known as "LACES"; and

Whereas, LACES is an organization that continues to serve those who live with or are affected by the chronic autoimmune disorder Lupus, by empowering patients, bringing attention to the disease, and leading the way to find a cure through research; and

Whereas, today LACES sponsors its 3rd Annual Ride 4 Lupus Motorcycle ride to raise awareness and funds to assist individuals living with lupus; and

Whereas, this unique organization has given of themselves tirelessly and unconditionally to advocate for our citizens and their families who battle lupus; and

Whereas, LACES continues to serve our county, state and country by being the sword and shield for those who live with lupus, encouraging better treatments, funding research and educating people about the disease to help heal families and strengthen our resolve to find a cure; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize LACES for their outstanding service to our District;

Now Therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim July 9, 2011 as "Lupus And Community Empowering Support Day" in the 4th Congressional District.

Proclaimed, this 9th day of July, 2011.

OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. DENNIS J. KUCINICH FOR SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY AFFAIRS, STIMULUS OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT SPENDING HEARING ON: "LIGHTS OUT: HOW EPA REGULATIONS THREATEN AFFORDABLE POWER AND JOB CREATION"

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, August 2, 2011*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following. Good afternoon, and thank you to all the witnesses who are here today to testify about a critical issue facing America: protection of the clean air and clean water on which we depend every single day. Today, we will once again look at the critical role the Environmental Protection Agency plays in supporting these goals.

Air toxics from coal-fired power plants cause or contribute to devastating health problems, ranging from asthma attacks to premature death from cardiovascular disease, stroke and cancer. One air toxic, mercury, damages the developing brains of fetuses, infants and small children, robbing them of the opportunity to fully develop intellectually and physically. Coal burning emissions of sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides help fuel our nation's asthma problem and can increase heart attacks.

The burning of coal is also a major contributor to the environmental, national security, and economic crisis that is global climate change. The combustion of coal produces a tremendous amount of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes to increased trapping of heat in our atmosphere. In fact, coal accounts for roughly 20% of all greenhouse gas emissions. It would be difficult to underestimate the urgency of shutting down coal power plants immediately for this reason alone.

These health and environmental consequences from toxic pollution are why the Environmental Protection Agency is developing tougher safeguards to protect Americans. One proposed rule on Mercury and Air Toxics alone would be estimated to save as many as 17,000 lives every year by 2015 and prevent up to 120,000 cases of childhood asthma.

One of the witnesses here to testify today represents American Electric Power (AEP), which is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. AEP is also one of our nation's biggest polluters. Another one of Ohio's polluters, FirstEnergy Corporation, which owns Lake Shore Plant in Cleveland in my own district, is identified as the nation's sixth-most harmful plant for low-income communities and communities of color. Thanks in part to AEP and FirstEnergy, the State of Ohio has more coal-fired generating capacity than any other state in the nation. Ohio's electric sector also has the ignominious honor of ranking FIRST in the amount of toxic air pollution it emitted in 2009, emitting more than 44.5 million pounds of harmful chemicals, which accounted for 65% of the state's pollution and 12% of toxic pollution from all U.S. power plants. Ohio also ranked THIRD among all states in mercury air pollution from power plants with about 3,980 pounds emitted in 2009, which accounted for

76% of the state's mercury air pollution and 6% of U.S. electric sector pollution.

AEP has lobbied against the Environmental Protection Agency's current efforts to regulate power plant pollution, and is pushing legislation to weaken and delay these regulations. I look forward to hearing from AEP today about how they can justify the tragic and destructive side effects that coal-fired power plants wreak upon us, as well as what steps they are taking to curb emissions of toxic air pollution in the United States.

While it is consistent with the history of big business to kick and scream about having to minimize the social and environmental harms they cause, we should NOT underestimate the entrepreneurial ability of America's electric sector to invest, retrofit and construct clean energy generation, while maintaining system reliability. In fact, when they upgrade our nation's electric generation infrastructure to comply with new regulations, their capital investments will help drive economic growth and create jobs. According to a study prepared by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, two of the proposed EPA Regulations—the Clean Air Transport Rule, and the new Mercury and Air Toxics Standards—could stimulate the creation of more than 1.4 million jobs over the next five years in the pollution controls, engineering, and construction fields.

Congress passed the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act because the American public demanded it. The American people demanded it because they don't like their children to inhale and drink and die from toxic compounds from which even the most diligent parent can't protect her child. Nothing about this equation has changed, and we must allow the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to fulfill its mandate to protect our water and air. I look forward to hearing from the Environmental Protection Agency today about how it continues to fulfill this promise to America.

#### A TRIBUTE TO THE BLUE DEVILS

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, August 2, 2011*

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Iowa's Class A Baseball State Champions and current holder of the national-record winning streak, the Martensdale-St. Mary's Blue Devils.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House, what this team has accomplished is nothing short of amazing. Last week, the Blue Devils sealed their second consecutive state championship by rallying from behind three separate times throughout the state tournament baseball game. And while the Blue Devils' second state championship in as many years is an incredible feat in and of itself, their most recent win has also placed their consecutive games won at an astonishing 87, giving them the best record in the Nation.

This special team consists of a large roster of players that have each contributed a unique quality to the team's record-breaking success. The Blue Devils consist of seniors Dillon Coates and Ethan Westphal, juniors David Walker, Zeb Noel, Josh Defenbaugh, Robert Walker, J.D. Nielsen, Jake Antcil, T.J. Foster,